TEN YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 1986–1996

W.P. Whitsett Endowment

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The W.P. Whitsett California Lecture Series was started in 1986 as part of the Whitsett Endowment at California State University, Northridge. Donald Worster is the tenth prominent scholar from the fields of California and Western history to participate in the Series. The Whitsett Lecture is offered annually each Spring.

In 1987 Dr. John Baur, a founding member of the Whitsett Committee, wrote the first scholarly biographical sketch of William Paul Whitsett. The twenty-two page biographical essay is based on the W.P. Whitsett papers housed in the Los Angeles Valley College Museum and related Whitsett materials in the Huntington Library archives. The published essay is available upon request from the CSUN history department.

In 1989 the Whitsett Committee, with the help of the Whitsett Trustees and the University, opened the W.P. Whitsett Room in Fine Arts 129. The Room was designed to house books and artifacts on California and Western history, as well as to host lectures and social gatherings sponsored by the Whitsett Committee and the History Department. The Room has been closed since the January 1994 earthquake, but will be reopened when repairs of the Fine Arts building are completed.

Since 1989 the Whitsett Committee has purchased a significant number of books on California history to be housed in the Whitsett Room for use by history students and members of the History Department. Two donated collections of books have been added to the Whitsett Committee's purchases–the John E. Baur Collection on California and Western history donated to the Whitsett Room before Dr. Baur's death, and the Francis J. Weber Collection on California Mission history donated to the Whitsett Room in December 1995 by Monseigneur Weber. Additional book donations from residents of the surrounding community have been received by the Whitsett Committee over the past ten years.

The Valley Pioneer Lecture Series was founded in 1991 to sponsor lectures on California history topics of current interest to the University and the surrounding community. Since its inception, five scholars have delivered lectures in the Series. The Valley Pioneer Lecture is offered annually each Fall and is sponsored by the Whitsett Committee.

In 1994, Dr. Gloria Lothrop was appointed as the first holder of the W.P. Whitsett Chair in California History—the only endowed chair in California history in the state. Dr. Lothrop came to CSUN after a distinguished teaching and research career at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona. The author of numerous books and articles, she is widely recognized as a leader in the promotion and advancement of California history.

In 1994 arrangements were made to publish the W.P. Whitsett Lecture annually in the Spring issue of the *Southern California Quarterly* published by the Historical Society of Southern California. A special edition of the *Quarterly*, which included five of the first seven Whitsett Lectures, was published in Spring 1994. A copy of the special edition is available upon request from the history department.

The Whitsett Committee, in cooperation with faculty members from other departments, sponsored the creation of a new California Studies interdisciplinary Minor program in 1995. For inclusion in the interdisciplinary Minor, the Committee developed a new interdisciplinary course taught for the first time in Fall 1995, "Los Angeles: Past, Present, and Future". The course features faculty lecturers from several disciplines, guest speakers from off-campus, and field trips to prominent local historical sites.

During 1995–1996, the Whitsett Committee has sponsored CSUN student participation in several history conferences in the Los Angeles area which have focused on California history themes and topics.

Beginning in January 1996, the Whitsett Committee launched a collaborative effort with the Historical Society of Southern California to co-sponsor an annual History Conference for teachers at the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum. The first conference, entitled "Los Angeles History: Old Venues, New Vistas", drew over 200 teachers, students, and history buffs from the Los Angeles community.

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